STUDIES IN LUTHER'S INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIERN PEDERSEN'S DANISH NEW TESTAMENT OF 1531

BY

EINAR WULFSBERG ANDERSON

B.A., University of Minnesota, 1925

M.A., University of Minnesota, 1926

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN GERMAN IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1944

URBANA, ILLINOIS

1944

STUDIES IN LUTHER'S INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIERN PEDERSEN'S DANISH NEW TESTAMENT OF 1531

BY

EINAR WULFSBERG ANDERSON

B.A., University of Minnesota, 1925

M.A., University of Minnesota, 1926

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN GERMAN IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1944

URBANA, ILLINOIS

1944

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/IA41549818_0419

STUDIES IN LUTHER'S INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIERN PEDERSEN'S DANISH NEW TESTAMENT OF 1531

Pedersen's version of the *New Testament* was indeed an outstanding contribution to the earlier translations of the *Bible* into Scandinavian languages. The turn of events in the history of Denmark during the early part of the sixteenth century brought on a desire for a rendering of the *New Testament* in a form of the vernacular which could easily be understood by every Dane. The earlier Danish edition of the *New Testament* by Hans Mikkelsen (1524) and the first Swedish translation by Olaus Petri and Laurentius Andreae (1526) preceded Pedersen's translation of 1529. Pedersen's second edition, printed in 1531 (also in Antwerp), became well-known throughout Denmark. It became the accepted edition of the *New Testament* in Denmark until 1550, and had great influence on the style of the Danish language of the sixteenth century.[1]

The most important event of the sixteenth century, as far as it pertained to the Danish language, was the publication of the entire *Bible* in 1550. Christiern Pedersen was one of the men who was commissioned by Christian III to do the work of translation, and his earlier experience in rendering the *New Testament* stood him in good stead. Since linguistic usage in Danish was so uncertain, translating the *Bible* demanded a scholar who had a delicate feeling for the vernacular. The work which Pedersen did in Denmark is great in just this regard, for his translation of the *New Testament* marks an important milestone in the development of the Danish language into an adequate medium of expression for the nation.

In a declaration in his *Preface to St. Paul's Epistles,* he claimed that he followed "the very best and highest scholars", a statement which refers to an edition of the Vulgate, some edition of Erasmus, and to Luther's first translations of the *New Testament.*[2] Since Pedersen admits that he was not a Greek scholar, his knowledge of Latin and German were his first means in arriving at the thoughts of the original. His contribution to the official Danish Bible of Denmark (1550) was significant; this is borne out by the records kept for King Christian III.[3]

C. J. Brandt, who wrote the authoritative biography of Christiern Pedersen,[4] estimates his birth to have taken place around 1480. His early education was received at Roskilde, and his higher education at the University of Copenhagen. He was called as Canon at Lund, from which place he was sent on a fellowship to the University of Paris in 1510. While he was there, he published a number of works, most of them in Latin or Danish, extending from a Latin-Danish dictionary (1510) to his *"Søndags-Postille"* (1515) and *"Peder Laales Ordbog"* (1515). The disturbed political situation under Christian II caused Pedersen to give up his Canonate at Lund, and leave for Paris, where he remained until 1527. He then left for Lyra near Antwerp, where Christian II lived during his exile, and during this period, he became a convert to Lutheranism. He was then commissioned by King Christian II to make a new translation of the *New Testament,* as the earlier version of 1524, translated by Hans Mikkelsen and Chr. Vinter, was very unsatisfactory.[5]

In his first edition of the *New Testament* (1529), Pedersen mentions the Latin as his base. He used Erasmus' edition of the *New Testament* text, and the Vulgate as his authorities. Luther is not definitely referred to by Pedersen in his *Prefaces,* but a study of *Pedersen's New Testament* reveals that Luther's version had a definite influence on the work of the Dane. In his second edition of the *New Testament,* which appeared in 1531, Pedersen made a number of corrections and revisions, involving typographical and other shortcomings. This edition became the authoritative translation of the *New Testament* until the *Danish Bible* of 1550 appeared as the official translation commissioned by Christian III.[6]

Christiern Pedersen returned to Denmark in the early part of 1532, and established a printing concern at Malmø. Here he published a number of works in 1533 and 1534. In the commission which King Christian III gave for the translation of the entire *Bible* into Danish, Pedersen was given the main responsibility for the "first draft". He sold his press, and remained at Malmø until his wife's death in 1539. With a number of other scholars, he was commissioned to translate and prepare the final draft of the *Bible,* which task was completed in 1543. Pedersen remained in Helsinge until his death on January 16, 1554.[7]

When Pedersen agreed to make a new translation of the *New Testament,* since the earlier edition by Hans Mikkelsen had proved to be unsatisfactory, he had the desire to publish a version in the form of the language which would be understood by every Dane. Brandt's statement concerning him as a master translator is surpassed only by Molbech's contention that he was the true father of modern Danish literature. Mikkelsen's earlier translation, which was filled with errors, oddities, and clumsy constructions, according to the statements made by contemporaries, was probably also used to some extent by Pedersen. This fact is confirmed by a closer study of Pedersen's *Prefaces* to the various books of the *New Testament;* however, the language and style of the 1531 version show a definite degree of independence from any other source than the Latin or the German.

This new version of Pedersen's was a remarkable achievement, and a definite proof of the man's ability to translate from the Latin and adapt the German to his own needs. His lack of knowledge of the original Greek placed him in a position of dependence on the Vulgate, Erasmus, and Luther; but by exercising freedom and independence of any single version, he was able to express, clearly and concisely, the thought of his bases in his mother tongue. His rendering of such words as faith, law, righteousness, sin, flesh, spirit, etc., became a part of his contribution to the literature of the Reformation. His further contribution was the awakening of a national and spiritual consciousness among his people to a fuller realization of their heritage and language.

Molbech's comments on Pedersen's ability as a translator are summarized in a quotation from Münter's *History of the Danish Reformation*—"Pedersen's translations are very carefully thought out, without any forcing of phrases, and are worded in a flowing and classical language; it is no exaggeration to say that Pedersen played the same role for the Danish language that Luther did for the German."[8]

Christiern Pedersen established for himself a definite method in translating the *New Testament* into the Danish. In his *Preface to St. Paul's Letters,* he states that "one who wishes to translate anything should at least speak and write in such a way that others who are of the same tongue (tungemaal) can understand whenever they read or hear it."[9] He adds further that "in order to translate correctly, so that the result would be intelligible to the common reader, he has followed the best and foremost scholars of his day".[10]

In the comments and notes in Vol. III of the official edition of *Christiern Pedersens Danske Skrifter,* C. J. Brandt outlines Pedersen's method in translating from the Latin and in adapting features of the German. He lists the passages which he thinks were influenced by Luther. Examples of these are found in—

Matt. 6,13;	I Cor. 10,28;	II Cor. 6,13;
Matt. 10,12,	I Cor. 11,24;	Gal. 3,3.
Luke 2,14;	I Cor. 15,24;	

Brandt infers that Luther's influence was to be found in many other passages in Pedersen's translation. The present study included a long list of the passages which seemed to show Pedersen's dependence on Luther,—these were marked with asterisks in the materials contained in Chapter V. Others which showed possible parallels to Luther's translation were listed without asterisks, and a third group contained those passages, in which Luther had availed himself of Erasmus' reading, and in which Pedersen seemed to follow Luther, *i.e.*, in the preference for Erasmus over the Vulgate.

In the passages where it is evident that Pedersen followed Luther in preference to the other bases, his technique was studied. Pedersen's outstanding device was simplification, by which a single word was substituted for two or more words in the other versions, or by the substitution of a simple word or phrase for more complex clauses and phrases. The translation of a relative clause by a substantive adjective is illustrated in Matt. 11,12 and Luke 14,12. Other simplifications were the translation of a prepositional phrase for an adverbial clause as in Matt. 20,8; a noun for an adverbial clause in Matt. 26,58; and a relative clause for a substantive and a prepositional phrase in John 9,1. The use of adverbs, such as "strax" and "storlige" help to simplify Pedersen's sentences, as in Luke 8,25 and Luke 8,37. Other examples of simplified translations are to be found in—

Acts 16,10;	I Cor. 12,24;	II Peter 1,20;
Acts 17,13:	Eph. 2,5;	Hebr. 10,9b.
Acts 20,22;	Col. 3,22;	

Entire phrases and clauses are frequently omitted by Pedersen, and new and simplified expressions are substituted. Word sequence has also been frequently changed.

A special technique for the translation of all participal constructions from the Latin, is one of the foremost characteristics that Pedersen has in common with Luther. Present active participles are translated as finite verbs or parts of an independent sentence. Past participles are also translated by Luther and Pedersen in a similar manner. (Luke 23,16; Luke 21,28; Acts 20,22; Rom. 1,1; Rom. 8,3.) The ablative absolute construction in the Latin has been translated by a temporal clause in Pedersen and Luther in the *Epistles*, while the participle in its active form has been translated by a finite verb.

The gerund and the gerundive in the Latin versions are translated by infinitives in Luther's translation. (Examples are Matt. 2,13b; Acts 16,10; II Tim. 2,25.)

In comparing the Swedish translation of Laurentius Andreae with Luther's, Pedersen's and the Latin versions, it is evident that many passages show similarity between Luther and the Scandinavian versions. There are enough examples, however, to show that the Swedish version follows the Latin more closely than does Pedersen in translating the active participle literally. (Mark 10,2; Acts 20,22; Acts 9,7.)

Word order and sentence structure in Luther's and Pedersen's version, compared with the Latin, frequently show Luther's influence. (Luke 1,37; Luke 2,27.) In general, it is evident that Pedersen did not hesitate to use his own word order in translating phrases or clauses. The rendering of Rom. 3,28, in which Luther has added the word "alleyn", shows clearly Luther's influence on Pedersen, for he has also used the same word order and phrase in the Danish (all eniste).

Pedersen has a word order similar to Luther's in most of the passages which are starred in Chapter V. Some small variations in phrase or clause sequence may occur, but they are not significant enough to change the thought expressed by Luther. His influence is also evident in the choice of individual words, which translate the Latin versions correctly, yet are different enough from the Latin (or the Greek original) to substantiate the contention that Pedersen followed Luther's example.

The addition of extra words and expressions are noticeable in:—

Matt. 13,54;	Matt. 26,17;	John 13,25;
Matt. 18,17;	Mark 15,3;	John 13,29.
Matt. 21,9;	Luke 15,7;	
Matt. 22,19;	Luke 22,55;	

Passages in which it is evident that Pedersen has expanded on Luther's version are not too numerous, yet they are very significant (Matt. 27,29; Mark 4,9; Luke 6,7; John 6,2.)

Passages in which omissions are made by Pedersen as compared with Luther's renderings are limited to short phrases, which could very easily be dropped without changing the

thought of the original (Matt. 26,53; Mark 9,43; and Luke 23,46.) Many phrases and clauses are omitted, without changing the thought of the original, in Pedersen's renderings. The omission of many of these phrases and expressions are a part of Pedersen's technique in simplifying Luther's text.

In conclusion, it is very evident that Luther's influence on Pedersen's translation shows itself, whenever the construction of the German version suggested a practical adaptation to Danish idiom. Yet, in passages influenced by Luther, simplification, additions and omissions, changes in word order and sentence structure were, nevertheless, techniques characteristic of Pedersen. Pedersen's aim was to make a translation in clear and concise Danish phraseology, based primarily on the Latin text, yet with whatever adaptations of Luther's version the Dane regarded as most fitting.

Some of the better passages from the Gospels are quoted below, as examples of Luther's direct influence on Pedersen's translation (from starred passages of Chapter V.)

To facilitate comparison, the Latin versions are also given.

Matt. 11,20: und hatten sich doch nit gebessert (Luther)
for de bædrede dem icke (Pedersen)
(V): quia non egissent penitentiam.
(E): quod scelerunt eas non poenituisset.

Matt. 19,15: und der leget die hend auff sie, und zoch von dannen.
Han lagde sin hand paa dem oc gik deden.
(V) & (E): Et cum imposuisee sis manus, abiit inde.

Matt. 24,22: Und wo dise tage nit werden verkurtzt, so wurde keyn mensch selig.
Oc uden de dage bleffue forstecte, da bliffuer der inge menniske salige.
(V) & (E): Et cum imposuiset eis manus, abiit inde.
fieret salva omnis caro.

Mark 1,26: Und der unsawber reys yhn, und schrey lautt, und fur aus von yhm.
Den onde aand reff manden, oc robede høyt, oc for ud aff hannem.

(V): Et discerpens (E: cum discerpisset) eum spiritus immundus, et exclamans (E: exclamassetque) voce magna, exiit ab eo.

Mark 5,33: Das weyb aber furcht sich und zitteret, den sie wuste was an yhr geschehen war.

Qvinden bleff rædt oc bevede thi hun viste hvad hende vor skeet.

(V) & (E): Mulier vero timens et tremens, sciens quod factum esset in se.

Mark 6,20: Herodes aber furcht Johannen, den er wuste, das er eyn frumer und heyliger mann war.

Herodes frøctede hannem thi han viste ath han var en retwis och hellig mand.

(V) & (E): Herodes enim metuebat Johannem, sciens eum virim iustum et sanctum.

Mark 8,18: Habt augen und sehet nicht, und habt oren und horet nicht.

Haffue i øgen oc see icke, och haffue i ørn och høre icke.

(V): Oculos habentes non videtis (E: cernitis) et auros habentes non auditis.

Mark 10,2: Und die Phariseer traten zu yhm, und fragten yhn, ob eyn man sich scheyden muge von seynem weybe, und versuchten yhn damit.

Da ginge Phariseerne til hannem oc spurde, Om det sømer sig at en mand maa skilye sig ved sin hustru. Hermed fristede de hannem.

(V): Et accedentes (E: adeuntes) Pharisaei interrogabant eum; (E: illum) si licet (E: licetne) viro uvorem dimmittere; (E: repudiare) tentantes eum (E: illum).

Luke 1,37: Denn bey Gott ist keyn ding unmuglich.

Thi der er inted ummeligt faar Gud.

(V) & (E): Quia non erit impossibile apud Deum omne verbum.

Luke 2,27: Und kam aus anregen des geysts ynn den tempel.

Han kom i templen aff den helligaands indskydelse.

(V) & (E): Et venit in spiritu in templum.

Luke 3,9: Wilcher bawm nicht gute frucht bringt wirt abgehawen.

Thi hver træ som icke gør god fruct, det skal aff huggis.

(V): Omnis ergo arbor non faciens fructum bonum, excidetur (E: exciditur).

Luke 6,7: Auff das sie eyne sach zu yhm funden.

Ath de kunde finde nogen sag at kære paa hannem.

(V) & (E): Ut invenirent unde accusarent eum.

Luke 9,1: Er foddert die zwelffe zu samen.

Jesus kallede de tolff Apostle til sammen.

(V) & (E): Convocatis autem duodecim Apostolis.

Luke 9,27: Das ettlich sind von den, die hie stehen, die den todt nicht schmecken werden.

At heer staar nogle som icke skulle smage døden.

(V): Sunt aliqui (E: quidam hic) his stantes, qui non gustabant mortem.

Luke 9,62: Jhesus sprach zu yhm, wer seyne hand an den pflug leget und sihet zu ruck, der ist nicht geschickt, zum reych Gottis.

Jhesus svarede hannem, hvo som legger sin hand paa plowen och seer til bage, han er icke bequem til Gudz Rige.

(V): Ait ad illum Iesus: Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum (E: Nemo qui manu sua admoda aratro), et respiciens retro (E: respexerit a tergo) aptus est regno Dei.

Luke 11,43: Und wollt grusset seyn auff dem markt.

Och i ville hilses paa torffuit.

(V) & (E): quia deligitis . . . salutationes in foro.

Luke 15,5: So legt ers auff seyne achseln mit freuden.

Da legger han det paa sine skuldre met glede.

(V) & (E): Imponit in humeros suos gaudens.

Luke 16,2: Denn du kanst hynfurt nicht hauss halter seyn.

Thi dw tien icke lenger ath vere foged.

(V): Iam enim non porteris villicare (E: posthac dispensare).

Luke 20,1: Und es begab sich der tage eynen, da er das volck leret ym tempel, und predigt das Evangelion.

Det skede paa en dag som Jesus lerde folket i Templen oc predickede Evangelium.

(V) & (E): Et factum est in una dierum, docente illo populum in templo et evangelizante.

Luke 21,28: Wenn aber dises anfehet zu geschehen, so sehet auff und hebt ewre hewpter auff.

Naar dette begynder ath ske, Da opløffter eders hoffuit oc seer op.

(V): His autem fieri incipientibus, respicite (E: suspicite).

Luke 23,16: Rarumb will ich yhn zuchtizen und los lassen.

Thi will jeg straffe hannem oc lade hannem løss.

(V): Emendatum ,E: castigatum) ergo illum dimittam.

Luke 23,34: 2Und sie teyleten seyne kleyder und worffen das los drumb.

De skiffte hans klæder oc laste laader om dem.

(V) & (E): Dividentes vero vestimenta eius, miserunt fortes.

John 6,2: Darumb das sie die zeychen sahen die er an den krancken thet.

Thi de saage de tegen som han giorde met siuge menniske.

(V) & (E): Quia videbant signa, quae faciebat super his, qui infirmabantur.

John 10,40: Da Johannes vorhyn tauffet hatt, und bleyb alda.

Der som Joannes før døbte oc bleff der.

(V) & (E): Ubi erat (E: fuerat) Joannes baptizans primum.

John 11,16: Da sprach Thomas, der genennet ist, zwilling.

Da sagde Tomas som kallis twilling.

(V) & (E): Dixit ergo Thomas, qui dicitur Didymus.

John 20,24: Thomas aber der zwellfen eyner, der da heyst, zwilling.

Thomas en aff de tolff som kallis twilling.

(V) & (E): Thomas autem unus ex duodecim, qui dicitur Didymus.

* * * *

Pedersen showed that he was very much at home in the Latin language, in which he had at hand the two versions, Vulgate and Erasmus, of the *New Testament.* The Germanic idiom of Luther was frequently a definite influence in suggesting the form for the Danish expression. Luther's influence on Pedersen is particularly evident in the starred passages of the main study, in

which the German version was favored in preference to either of the Latin texts. The influence of Luther in following Erasmus is shown in those passages where the latter deviated from the Vulgate. The freedom which Pedersen exercised is using now one, and then another Latin version, bears out Brandt's contention in his *Comments* that Pedersen "used the foremost scholars of his day". The frequency with which Luther's influence appears in Pedersen, either directly or indirectly, bears out Brandt's further contention that Luther's version definitely was used by Pedersen in his translation of the *New Testament.*

---

[1] **R**ealencyklopaedie, Vol. III, p. 150.

[2] *Christiern Pedersens Danske Skrifter,* Vol. III, p. 287.

[3] Molbech, Chr., p. 75. (Include full title on p. 3a) Footnote No. 1.)

[4] Brandt, C. J., Om Lunde-Kanniken Chr. Pedersen oghans Skrifter. Copenhagen. 1882.

[5] Henderson, E., *Dissertation on Hans Mikkelsen's Translation of the New Testament.* Copenhagen (1813), p. 23.

[6] Molbech, Chr., *Bidrag til en Historie og Sprogskildring af de danske Bibeloversættelser fra det 16de Arhundrede,* Copenhagen, 1840, p. 75.

[7] Brandt, C. J., *Om Lunde-Kanniken Christiern Pedersen og hans Skrifter.* Copenhagen, 1882, p. 317.

[8] Münter, Fr., *Den danske Reformations Historie,* Vol. II, p. 73.

[9] *Christiern Pedersens Danske Skrifter,* Vol. III, p. 288.

[10] *Ibid.*

Vita

Einar Wulfsberg Anderson was born in Minneapolis, Minn., on July 18, 1905, the son of the Reverend Christian Anderson and Inger Elsie Wulfsberg. He was educated at Immanuel Lutheran School, and North High School, of Minneapolis, Concordia College of St. Paul, and at the University of Minnesota. (A.B. '25, M.A. '26.)

After graduating from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., in 1929, he accepted a call as pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wis., where he served until 1932. He then entered the Graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, and after completing a year's study, transferred to Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., where he continued his studies under Dr. Otto Heller and Prof. Erich Hofacker. After accepting a position as Principal of Morrisonville Community High School, Illinois, in 1934, he continued his graduate studies at the University of Illinois. In 1939, he accepted a position as Principal of Nokomis Township High School, Illinois, and in 1941 completed the residence requirements for the Doctor's Degree. Since 1941, he has been Chairman of the Language Department, at Lyons Township High School at La Grange, Ill.

The bulk of the responsibility for the successful completion of the thesis lies with Prof. C. A. Williams, who has been the candidate's advisor through all the vicissitudes of work done in absentia, guiding him carefully and patiently to that end. The candidate is very grateful to him. He also offers especial thanks to Prof. A. W. Aron and Prof. H. Larsen for their comments and interest in the subject of the dissertation. The various university libraries that were kind enough to loan books for long periods of time also deserve special mention, (Illinois, Chicago, Augustana, Minnesota, and Cornell).